

## Unit 1/Lesson 4

### Lesson Title: The Office of the President According to the US Constitution

**Short Term Goal:** Understand what a president does, how he or she gets elected, and the concept of a four-year term of office as outlined in the US Constitution as well as what are the qualities of a president?

#### SLE's:

C.4.3.4: Identify the fundamental ideals of democracy (e.g., human rights, justice, common good, equal opportunity)

C.5.3.1: Examine the significance of national symbols and the role they play in fostering effective citizenship (e.g., National Anthem, Liberty Bell, Pledge of Allegiance, American Flag, Statue of Liberty, United States Constitution)

C.5.3.2: Describe how citizens contribute to the improvement of a community (e.g., service projects, volunteerism)

#### Common Core Standards:

**CC3RI1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers

**CC3RI2** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details & explain how they support the main idea.

**CC3RI7** Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

**CC3SL1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**CC.3.W.4.** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

#### Materials:

writing surface such as chalkboard or whiteboard

Construction paper      glue

magazines (such as *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, etc.)

Computer access for finding clip art

newspapers

*Duck for President* by Doreen Cronin (CALS site)

*Election Day* by Patricia Murphy (CALS site)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYzCpPJrs6k> (Characteristics of a President)

**Direct Explanation/Model:**

One to Two Sessions/ whole group

**What:**

The students will demonstrate an understanding of what the president does, how he or she gets elected, and the concept of a four-year term of office as outlined in the US Constitution. They will also show an understanding of the formal as well as informal characteristics of the man or woman who is the President of the United States.

**Why:**

Citizens contribute to the community by electing leaders. In order to choose wisely we should understand the job requirements and the characteristics that one must have in order to fulfill them.

**How:**

The students will read the Article II of the US Constitution to find out the responsibilities of the president. Then they will view a Nickelodeon video on the characteristics of the president, list the characteristics that they find to be necessary to be good presidents and then create a collage of the man or woman of their choice. They will include formal as well as some informal characteristics.

**Session One:**

Start by assessing what your students already know. The knowledge level is certain to vary between different children in the class -- from not having even heard the word “president” before to knowing exactly who the current president is. Make sure everyone has a very basic understanding by asking questions such as:

- What do you think a president does?
- What are some qualities a president should have?
- Who is our president?

*Hint:* When students are answering your questions, take notes on an interactive white board. Start a list of presidential duties, characteristics and qualities and continue to add to it throughout the lesson.

Now, bring the students up to speed with some fast presidential facts:

- The president is the person in charge of our country, the United States. It’s similar to how the school principal is in charge of the school.
- The president is hired by the American people for a four-year job. Once the four years are up, the people can either re-hire him or choose someone else. No one can be hired more than twice.
- Barack Obama is the current and 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. He’d like to be re-hired in November 2012.

- Explain to students that the Constitution gives executive power to the President. Refer students to Article II, Sections 2 and 3. Read these out loud to give students a clear idea of the work of the President.

- Ask students if they have heard the President described by any other titles or "roles." If students know of these "roles" let them share its name and examples of its related responsibilities. Explain the following examples:

- **Chief Executive:** In this role the President is acting as the administrative head of the government. These duties include meeting with the cabinet, signing bills, issuing executive orders and appointing heads of departments and other government officials.
- **Chief Diplomat:** In this role the President is negotiating on behalf of the United States with foreign governments. The President can appoint ambassadors, make treaties, and support or oppose the actions of other nations.
- **Chief of State:** The President is the ceremonial head of the United States, speaking to the nation on topics of interest, meeting with important officials, and welcoming Heads of State from other countries.
- **Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces:** The President is the civilian head of the military and can order troops into battle or send them overseas.
- **Chief Legislator:** The President recommends legislation to Congress. The President can also threaten to veto bills s/he opposes.
- **Head of the Party:** The President can reward those who are loyal to the political party with jobs and support other candidates for public office.

**Guided Practice:** Talk about some of the duties and responsibilities of a president. What kinds of characteristics, qualities or actions are important in a presidential candidate? List them.

Watch the You Tube Nickelodeon video of the qualities of a president. As a group list them in two categories; formal and informal. Include the qualities from your earlier list in the two categories. Discuss how perceptions have changed over time. If time permits read *Duck for President* by Doreen Cronin or view it on the Central Arkansas Library site.

After reading the book, ask the students to describe the president or presidential-hopeful in the book. Make a list of these descriptive words on the same board that you used earlier to record presidential duties, characteristics and qualities. Remind the students that in the United States, we are lucky that we have the opportunity to choose our president by voting in an election.

Voting is a big responsibility. Read *Election Day* by Patricia Murphy on the CALS site. When you are old enough to vote, it will be important to learn all you can about each candidate so that you can make a good choice. What would make you vote or *not vote* for a particular candidate? (Add any relevant items to your class list of characteristics, qualities or actions.) *If a presidential campaign is underway currently:* What do you like or *not like* about particular candidates? Who would you vote for, and why?

### **Apply:**

Hand out the materials to students. Explain that they will draw/paste their “perfect” candidate on the construction paper. Encourage children to go beyond physical characteristics and incorporate desired actions and behaviors as they imagine their candidate. Remind them to use the list the class created of presidential qualities both formal and informal. Let them cut images from

magazines (and/or access clip art online) and use drawing materials to construct their candidate. They can add cut-out words to their candidate designs. Once the candidate collages are complete (and dry), discuss them as a class, letting each student talk a little about the candidate s/he created.